Love Lights
of
Ireland
D. L. Kelleher

From Mary
from D. D. H.

Xmas 1922

LOVELIGHTS OF IRELAND

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"The Glamour of Cork,"
Etc., etc.

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A WORD IN BEGINNING.

A book of "love-stories is like many books else, a beating of the air, a vanity.

Whose love-stories, indeed? The notorious, the scandalous, the artificially or accidentally famous? Yes, that is the limitation.

The romance, the pathos, the beauty, the rapture, the lyrical unselfishness or the uncomplaining agony of the love-stories that are enacted in the lives of the multitudinous unrecorded folk—who shall tell of them?

An artist is lame and limited. He can only work in the garish colours to hand. But there is hope for him so long as he believes in the colours that are unrevealed.

BRIDGET VESEY THAT RAFTERY LOVED.

He had a wonderful face, although the sight was lost on him, and his cheeks were drawn and pock-marked itself. It was the lips that were sensitive and shapely, as if the beauty of the two blinded eyes had come down into them.

And as the heart rises in him now, and he talks and gives out a bit of a rhyme, Breedyeen Vesey pauses over the cake she is making, and then, in a half-tranced kind of a way, sprinkles a handful of fresh flour down on the table by the kitchen window in that house in Loughrea where she is servant girl. And he, rising up from the chair and the drink she has laid for him, trembles and cries out that it is a queen and a goddess she is. And, that instant, the noon sun shines in upon her lovely neck and the finished curves of her bosom and arms above the floury table. And it is like a queen she is, indeed, or a carved Greek goddess, with the dust of the marble about her shining waist. And as Raftery, the poet that she was kind to, taps his way out on his stick that day he knows that his heart has seen the illimitable thing. And when he comes back

another day and finds her gone, with all her virtue and her beauty about her, he utters his cry:

"Oh, cool of the curls and the pearls,
The reason of my moans and my lamentings
Is that it is not you who were fated for me."

A cry that Breedyeen Vesey never heard at all, since in England a strange, unhappy destiny covered up her life from Raftery telling his sorrow to the lonely roads that he tramped in Connacht till the end.

AN OUTLAW'S MISTRESS.

Down where the firs begin, that are the forerunner of mountains, and where the forests go climbing, rich with the tonic of wind from river and lake, there is a cave by Gortmore west of Mallow, on the Blackwater bank. And often, when a big wind grapples with it, in agony and remembered passion, an old oak will moan, or a crabbed blackthorn bush, like baffled passion itself, will hiss with all its futile little leaves. And well may gale and havoc come that road, and hags gather from the glens, for a terrible memory lingers around. How once, when the Roches of Fermoy had beaten back the O'Keeffes, this clansman, Daniel, had made the cave his hiding-place, swimming the river below in daylight, using his curragh to cross in the guarding dark. A wild, shaggy fellow he was, seamed and scarred, and with compulsion in his eyes, and strength and protection in his stout neck and bronzed hairy chest. So that hither, drawn to her Hercules, comes one Margaret Kelly, to sleep on an old plank and a wet skin rug, scorning danger, discomfort, isolation, God and all for her untamed man. Beautiful she is among women, sought for by lovers everywhere in the barony.

But no offered gardens nor stately hall shall beguile her out of her choice of the cave and the conquest of her wild lover here. She that knows his whistle over the oil-dark waters, and will ferry the curragh to bring him home; she that will suffer his drunken buffetings on the nights he is the real beast, and take him in her arms and soothe him with primal passion at the end of it all—this surely is love in its height and in its depth, so deep even that it shall one day tumble through and be lost for ever in hell.

For Margaret Kelly, rising with the frenzy of love's reaction in her, makes her way into Mallow this other night to the camp of the enemy there, and compact is made by which she shall betray her master very soon. Only once again before the slaughter she will go to him, just once, for the compulsion is fierce and she cannot resist. So for the last time in their cave she will drink up desire and stagger off, and then—oh, let him be riddled and damned, she shall have had her fill.

But Daniel is wary, has known woman too long to be thrown off his guard even by this burning lure that is in Margaret Kelly now. There is a paper stuck down inside her jacket. It suddenly emerges as she coils herself towards him. He plunges for it, reads

and discovers the plan upon it for his own killing. So, apter than any bull-fighter in Spain, he snatches the knife out of his belt and lets it rip down Margaret Kelly's bosom till the heart is touched, and with a spout of blood she falls dead amid the planks and puddle. After which, shrewdly wiping his weapon (since these are doubtful times and other work remains) Daniel O'Keeffe flies across country, fighting and looting and fearless, until he goes down at last himself west of Clondrohid before the English guns.

SCHOLAR O'CLERY IS CALLED TO ASSAROE.

When the Anglo-Normans reached Connaught there were many fine families that had to leave their homes. The O'Clerys, that were descended from Guaire Aidhne, "the hospitable," were dispossessed by the De Burgos, and they drifted down to Meath and the Shannon plains. But those who were left behind in the sheltered places had a long memory of all that were gone. So two hundred years after—about 1380 it was—when there was a scholar wanted in the monastery of Assaroe, wasn't it one Dermot O'Clery the monks sent for, and he far away in Tirawley. And when he came with the learning, both civil and ecclesiastical that he had, it wasn't long before a great blessing came on him, and a great blessing upon Ireland too. It was the way the O'Sgingin, O'Donnell's traditional ollamh, had lost his son, and with his only daughter as yet unwed there was no male heir to carry on the grand ollamh tradition. The Prior of the monastery of Assaroe was greatly disturbed by it all in those times when learning and descent were in respect in the land. And he thought how grand it would be if a match could be made between Dermot

O'Clery, back from Tirawley, and O'Sgingin's daughter here. And 'twas the Lord ordered it, for O'Sgingin grew fascinated with the young scholar, and gave his daughter gladly in marriage to him, asking no *tinnscra* at all in the case. His only condition indeed was that, if God was good to them, the first-born male child should be trained up in history, so that he could succeed as ollamh too. And a son was born, to whom they gave the name Gilla-Brighde, and he became ollamh to the O'Donnell, and in his turn he married, and for seven generations there were chiefs and scholars born from that time, until in the eighth generation there were born in Kilbarron Castle, on the Donegal Coast, two boys, Conary and Michael, brothers by blood, and it was these two that, with their cousin, Cucogry, and another, were the Four Masters that compiled one of the greatest books that could ever be compiled about Ireland and her glory, the book of the "Annals of the Four Masters" that was partly put together in trouble and fear and anxiety in a cottage near the burned monastery of Donegal.

ELIZABETH FARREN OF CORK.

What father with a man's spirit does not live in the hope of a gallant son? What mother with a mother's love does not long for a child with goodness and grace and comeliness in him? And what parent of them all with a parent's instinct will not cover and shield all the children if, under Providence, those have no shining qualities whatever in them.

If creation may be satirised from many angles by the Swifts and the Nietzsches, it is because they have never loved with that love that is anchored to a star. It is above all because they have never known the revelation which love is when faithfulness is crowned by the coming of a child. And that revelation will as soon steal through a window of a humble cottage as it will over the terrace and balcony of a palace. A little obscure corner in a mean street will shine through the ages with it as when Catherine, the dyer's daughter, came in Siena. And by an inexplicable, but, it must be, quite definite plan, genius, as it is called, will bless the most unhappy or thriftless houses equally with the rest. So that the Christian concept of charity takes on an added justification, remembering how it is our worst enemy or our weakest friend who may

father or bring into the world a benefactor, a saint or hero, in God's design.

And in this particular instance it might have availed the father if his friends had moralised thus. But philosophy is scarce, and Christianity with many, however well they conform to their church type, is an unimaginative cult. So when Farren, the apothecary, in Washington Street, Cork, began to tipple and lose his trade, it was a foregone conclusion that himself and his wife and the seven little children would have to go into the workhouse very soon. Only heaven didn't at all favour that kind of logic, and into the soul of one of those little children, a girl it was, there fell a spark of the divine fire. She was such a splendid girl that she could act and dance at six or seven, and fill the hall for her father, who had turned strolling player, and strolling booser as well, in England now. And when he died, and she grew up, wasn't it the richest man in England, the Earl of Derby, fell in love with her and married her, and she became one of the greatest ladies of the land, so that all her shipwrecked family were helped up by her, and her long-suffering mother could die, thanking the day that she had herself married such a foolish husband, who had racked and ruined her, and then going away had left her such a keepsake in that wonderful child.

He is here at last now after all these cunning delays over there near Milford Haven. For although he had contracted to arrive a year ago, discretion outran his thuggery, and he had sent Fitzstephen and a couple of other knightly brigands to smell out the booty and take the edge off the danger well in advance. And 'tis doubtful if he would have crossed even now only that the hirer is offering to sub-let a part of the spoil in his absence.

For Dermot MacMurrogh, that charming fellow with the ulcers on him, has begun to hawk the girl up and down among the Fitzstephen gang, and will sell her out too if the first fellow doesn't look sharp! But jaded from women as he is, Strongbow won't stand for this threat. Here he is, then, up the Quay at Waterford, burning like the sun in a steaming bog. The walls are breached, the town has fallen—there is other and immediate booty within reach. So his neck swells and his heart hammers at the mail shirt as his looks float over this personal loot, booked well in advance too!

That's the stuff of conquest every time; blood-relationship founding even while other blood is spilled!

So Eva, the daughter of Dermot, without

love, without religion, without everything almost save her sex, surrenders to Strongbow, commander-in-chief of the first horde of Black and Tans, or Belial boys, or whatever other name they had, since in degree all the empire-making armies are akin.

Maclise has painted a picture of that wedding on the wall of Waterford, with the two of them amid corpses and half-corpses and the prime boys that made up the witnesses.

'Twas in the year 1169 it was, and Strongbow didn't live long after. In Christ Church in Dublin they buried him after his death in 1177, and later on they laid her body by his side, and the roof fell in on the place, as a person might expect.

And, surely, whatever we say in defence of ourselves, there must have been something particularly rotten in the state of Ireland when Providence allowed such terrible people to be amongst us. Perhaps it was the slaves we bought in Bristol and elsewhere through the centuries gone by and brought over to work here; perhaps it was they who were having their revenge in the scourge of Strongbow sent amongst us now. For in love and war, and all the rest of the human panorama, there is some principle of averages and compensations that none of the exact amoral philosophers have ever yet got near to solving.

A POOR CLARE.

In Geneva, the white gleaming town folded in a loop of Lac Leman, there is on St. Patrick's Day still one of the saddest of all the little pilgrimages of this earth. For here, though now he be old and frail and feeble, is a strange lonely man in blue, with steel-grey hair, and eyes so radiant as though it might seem that the visions of a boy were still before them. Though, truly, they are but swept clean by sorrow as a deep blue evening sky after the tempests of the day. For many years now, since his great uplifting, he has come every St. Patrick's Day into Geneva, and always into this restaurant in the Rue du Mont Blanc. So that his entrance is a tradition from waiter to waiter, and, in the far corner by the window, the chair is "tipped" up and the coverture marked "reservé" from early in the evening. But who and whence he was the proprietor could not tell me, only "anuzzer Irishmans," and "he will come always the 17 March."

And so he did that St. Patrick's Day I sat and waited inquisitively to see, though, indeed, save for the bunch of shamrock in his coat, I could have suspected nothing had I not looked very closely (for I had seated myself opposite his chair), and, in the head of the pin that

held it, noticed the tiniest little miniature imaginable of a woman's face. The sense of mystery, of romance, of symbolism in this treasured face, set thus in a frame of shamrock from Killarney, it might be, or from Arran, or from Donegal, that bids welcome to the weary surge, these were magical bonds, and I must learn more.

And somehow my eyes must have grown tender at the thing, for he reciprocated my "bonjour m'sieu" in a very friendly way, and talked almost as if he had been longing for the occasion.

"I live at les Avants above Montreux," said he, "but Geneva—ah! I prefer it always to-day, for I come here to be quiet and to think!" And so he thought aloud for me, and it went like this:—

"She—so you noticed?—ah! mon ami, no more than a child. Once—she was only nine years old then—I found her below my lawn with shamrocks like that all in her hair. She had heard some story at school of an Irish queen and her crown, and she was a little player queen herself then, with her crown of shamrocks in imitation, I suppose."

"Not your daughter, then?" I ventured.

"No, no," he went on. "The child of a

labourer of ours. I was only twenty years old myself—I was, even then, a little mad."

He laughed, and I tried to colour the phrase: "It is only an Irishman who knows how to be mad."

"Yes," he went on, "I watched that child grow up, with a kind of reverence. I used to visit her cottage and take her out walking with my own younger sisters. Then my father died—it left me suddenly wealthy. I offered to send her away here to be educated with my sisters. They came when she was sixteen to that Lycée you saw on the hill by Eaux Vives. I crossed from Ireland the very first spring they were away. On Patrick's Day the four of us came up here, and after they had had tea I called for a little liqueur and made them—they did not want to, but how could we celebrate it with tea only?—I made them drink the health of Ireland."

"I'll make it a toast with you now," I interrupted beckoning the waiter, who brought us a double Benedictine. My friend seemed to hesitate and grow pensive. "Your little shamrock lady! May she——" said I.

He leaned forward and caught my wrist as I was lifting my glass. "No, no! Please not that! You cannot wish her anything now."

My curiosity was aroused more than ever

at the phrase. What had become of her? I began again stealthily to question him. "And your sisters? Not many came so far to be educated in those days? They settled in Ireland again?"

"Yes, they went back. They married and seemed prosperous. One is dead, the other is still in Kerry."

"A beautiful county! Your native one?"

"Ah! you will excuse my not answering that," said he, spoiling my attempt to outflank. "Garcon"—he called the waiter again—"Encore deux!" and our little glasses burned golden to the brim. "All Ireland, sir," he said.

"From Cork to Malin Head," said I, drinking quickly to encourage him. For somehow the reticence of the man, and the self-absorption that overcame him at intervals, now betokened, I thought, a "grande passion," and, flushed ever so little myself, I was out, morbidly curious, for the tale. "And the fields where first she found the shamrock!" I went on, harping on the emotional chord with slow intonation as I amplified the toast.

"You are clever!" said he suddenly, with a smile that showed he was superior to my trick. "I like to hear you draw me on to talk."

Ashamed of myself a little, I could make

no reply for a second. I shuddered as I realised how mean it was to attempt to get at an old man thus. What torture and despair might not still be his for his sins—and hers? I could have thrown over my chair and run out across the bridge and into the Jardin Anglais to hide myself from the crafty curiosity that had led me to this. But even as I half moved to be gone he leaned across the table again and laid his hand upon my shoulder.

"No! No!" said he, "I am not offended! Why should you not ask? I can read the question in your eyes. It shows you sympathise—and sympathy is everything."

"You are right, m'sieur; although I did try as a newspaper interviewer might do, I still had a kind of fellow-feeling in my curiosity. I'm sorry.

"Pourquoi pas?" he replied. "It eases an old man to open his heart sometimes. It is only the young who are afraid to tell their failures and sorrows. With us life has no more surprises, we cannot prejudice our chance of happiness or of hope in the future by talking of our past."

His voice, soft and mellow, as if it walked with memory up and down far corridors, soothed and silenced me without power of

reply. I played with my glass and looked into the yellow depth of it until a movement of his hand roused me again. He was taking the little miniature ever so tenderly out of the heart of the shamrocks. Then holding it out to me in his open hand, he went on as though under a spell. "You well may say she was a lovely child."

"And when she grew up?" I said, unable to control my curiosity.

"Ah, then, I did not see her," he answered, closing his fingers over the face.

"And you have never found her since?" I essayed, imagining they must have drifted utterly apart.

"Once," he went on, "but never now for many years."

It might be some Ophelia tale of beauty turned to madness that thus he treasured on his day of pilgrimage! The fascination of it was strong, and I could not now refrain.

"She had some great sorrow, too?" I asked very gently.

"Sorrow? Why, no! It was a great joy." And before I could reason out the paradox of his exposition he went on in a changed tone and with a sort of delight that an old man feels at seeing a young man's interest wrought into enthusiasm for his story. "It is nearly

forty years ago since she and I were last here—that day she told me she had made up her mind——" he said.

"But, she is not alive yet?" I interrupted, unable to check myself.

"Alive," said he, lapsing into a little note of brogue, as though this vivid talk of her had annihilated the years and brought his youthful accent back again. "Alive and active down at—well, I must not say. It is in the Canton Valais anyhow!" he answered.

"The Canton Valais? Why, that is only two hours away? Do you not then go?" I exclaimed, utterly provoked by the mystery.

He leaned over the table to me and said softly and with some sly humour, "You really believe in romance?"

"Of course!" I replied, irritated at the new turn of his narrative.

"And you are a Catholic?"

"Yes," I exclaimed, exasperated.

"Well, if once you knew a saint, and she exalted you by her sanctity, would you try to be heroic a little yourself, too?"

"I suppose I would try," I answered him again.

"Well now," said he, "the saint that I knew made a great sacrifice thirty odd years ago. I made up my mind that I would make a little

one in imitation. I have never married because of her!"

"And her sacrifice?"

"She is a nun since 1879, in the Order of the Poor Clares."

"Ah—h—h!" I ended, unable for wonder to articulate a phrase. He rose, looked at his watch, held out his hand, and bowed.

"My train leaves the Gare Cornavin at 6.30, m'sieur," said he. "I am almost late. Au revoir, m'sieur, et bon soir."

LORD SNAKE HAS HIS DIRTY REVENGE.

THE dilated pupils give him a hen's-eye look; his lips are a streak of blue grey ash; there is a catch in his voice when he speaks; the ghosts of many whose death he had contrived are clutching at his own throat now. For this is a desperate year—1793—in blood and hate upon the calendar; hearts rising like corn in France in swathes for the reaper; Death with his hook making surest harvest. And here, too, in Ireland, where men have watched these centuries for any sign, the eyes of the young are eager, wild. Especially these two from Glasheen, near Cork, whom Lord Clare, the snake in ermine, hisses upon in the House of Lords.

"My lords," he says, "they are members of the French Jacobin Club, in the pay of that society to foment sedition in this country." It is a lie, but a lie with fangs and viper windings and a venom within. For, ten years before, this ruffian, a "spoiled priest's" son, had courted and lost his Alicia Sweete, the girl from Blackrock, on the lovely Lee, who had taken instead the hand of Henry Sheares, the "Jacobin" here. And, beaten in love, the Chancellor will, at least, achieve a revenge.

So by a false trial, with Henry unnerved to tears and protests, and Curran, his counsel, collapsing from the case, the brothers Sheares are taken on the second day within a dirty, leering ring of soldiers to have their heads cut off outside Newgate Jail. Poor Alicia Sweete that was is dead and buried long before, after a married life of four short years. And, strange, too, she is buried in that little shrunken churchyard of St. Peter's in Aungier Street, Dublin, to which, shortly again after her husband's murder, the body of Lord Clare himself is brought for burial on a morning of riots and curses, when showers of garbage and dead rats and dogs are flung upon the snake's coffin by the howling crowd.

Mrs. HEMANS LOVES AND LOSES.

1793. Bright summer sun over Gwyrch House on its headland below the mountain and above the sea. Perfect seclusion amid the stillness of flowers, with no leaf stirring save where a young girl roves and sings across the meadow-sweet. Until they are calling to her from the garden to come and see this Irish visitor, a young captain of the King's Own Regiment, who has just arrived, and is going to be surprised into an illusion of love straightaway.

For the child is a charmer, though she does it by silences mostly and a word or two stealing up out of them flower-wise. And she is fanciful and can write lovely verses. And Percy Bysshe Shelley has tried to strike up an acquaintance with her the other day by letter when she was fifteen, and himself only a year older, because he had read some of her poetry just published, and had recognised a precocious kinship therein. But they didn't encourage that enterprising youth, and, at his fourth letter, mother counter-attacked and put him out of action by the kind of reply that only a mother can write in such an interesting encounter. Although, indeed, it might have been as well to encourage Shelley, judging by

the result of the young girl's only experiment in matrimony when she grew up. That's anticipating, however, so let us know at least who she is.

A good Irish girl then, with the kind of picturesque ancestry that results in poems. Felicia they call her, as if trying to outwit the infelicities of her fortune. And it was from Passage West, in the corner of that harbour of heart's delight at Cork, that her grandfather came. He was a shipping man, too, with an office for a while on the quay at Baile Atha Cliath, where the salt wind comes up with stories of the loveliness it saw and it doubling the Wicklow Head. Like many another they lost the business in the bad times of Ireland, and they came over *via* Liverpool to Wales to live economically on the money he had.

So it is glad enough her mother is to give her girl in three years' time (and she just nineteen) to this captain that is taken by her fifteen-year-old beauty to-day.

And the marriage is celebrated, and Mrs. Hemans, as her name becomes, gives birth to five children in the next six years, and then separates from her dull, practical, utterly uninteresting husband, whom she never sees again, and dies sixteen years after in Dublin, aged 41.

THE PROUD POERS ARE SAVED AT LAST BY LOVE.

A FEW miles from Cappoquin, just off the lonely road leading to Clonmel, stands an empty cup of an old place, with mud and dirt and nettles at the bottom of it. Sleady Castle it was called in its gay days, but now it is only a broken rimmed circle of stone, with an owl for owner. The story of it, however, has fragrance and cries to be told.

It was about 1600 that Philip McGrath, Philib na Tsioda (silken or elegant Philip), won the heart of a proud girl, Mary Poer, daughter of the fifth baron of Curraghmore. But when they were married, and a child was born, her ambition and her pride began to confound her, and Philip was bothered day and night with her discontents. Above all things, she could not bear this dwelling into which he had brought her at Fernane. And every day that was fine, to show her contempt for it, she had the dinner laid on the grassy knoll overlooking the Finnisk river near by. So that Philip was driven to call in the aid of his neighbours and friends to help him in building near Cappoquin town a grand castle that would soothe the proud longings of Mary Poer. Of good oak and new quarried stone it

rose up, and a moat was cut around it, and a sentry set at the gate within. But worn out with the joy of completion, and with the satisfaction that now at last he had tamed her intolerance, the poor man died off himself in a few years.

And 'twas then truly that the widow, with the three lovely growing girls, assumed the selfish fulness of a life she desired.

Her eldest daughter, Margaret, was a proud slip after the mother's heart, and 'twasn't long before she was a visitor to the garrison balls and parties at Clonmel. There were invitations naturally in return, and one night soon Sleady Castle was in its paroxysm of arrogance and success. For here, over the drawbridge, are three of the epauletted officers, one for each of the daughters, at the glittering dinner-party the mother has arranged. The wine flows, the plate shines, talk is rapid, and colour high. This way love and alliances are and shall be wrought till time and death keep the last tryst. So, surely, the mother dreams, there will be an engagement to announce, a furore to live through, a——but hush!

There is musket fire and confusion; the raparees are in; those three young magnificents are carried off, and meet the dreaded end in a bog-hole!

And thereafter Mary Poer that was and her three daughters are flung out, in real poverty now, to eat their bread in the fields by the river side. For an English Commission has decided that the Poers have been traitorous, and, since it is the aftermath of 1641, they must as papists be converted into beggars, the best "cure" for papacy!

Only somewhere a little tenderness has been hoarded by the Destinies, and the proud Poers will be spared. The English knight, one Osborne, to whom their estates are forfeit, is a planter out of a million. He sees the widow and her lovely daughters. To the youngest he offers back the castle and land to share if she will marry him. She accepts; the Poers are reinstated; there is a blessed peace down by the Finnisk side.

EDMUND SPENSER AND MISS BOYLE.

Edmund Spenser, one of the first of the bandit civilisation, as a poet and scholar, was a distinguished lover too. And when he met Elizabeth Boyle, of the clan of the master banditti, the Boyles of the Earldom and the land-stealing, he became a sweetheart as picturesque as any. And, like a child, as he walks by the sea with her at Youghal, he stops now and again to draw her name with a stick upon the sand, and his own name under it. And as a wind curtseys up and blows the two names together in a little glittering puzzle for lovers, they smile and dissolve into one another in reciprocating eclipse. Such moments signify for Ireland, indeed, and at least Spenser, the lover, will show us a more sympathetic nature than Spenser, the bachelor, isolated amongst us, and whining out to his employers at the English Court for the "expropriation, and, as far as may be, the extermination of the native race."

So for a little moment he is grateful to Ireland that gives him a wife. He has had many attachments, to be sure, elsewhere, vague and indetermined in detail, but poignant and passionate, to judge by the poems he has left

concerning them. This, however, is the real elixir, and the two of them thrill through their wedding at Cork, and their honeymoon wanderings over the fields and around the opaline evening lake by Kilcolman Castle. Until, again, the Fates are at their black balancing. And Spenser, that played with the sands, while the sea and sun threw rare lights upon him and his love, fades quickly out.

Clotho and Atropos and Lachesis, who do not ever forget, are turning to the phrase he uttered in his own flourishing hour. " Expropriation, and, as far as may be, extermination," he called it. And, behold, how the curse has returned to him, and flying he is now, himself and his young children, from that castle they stole, flying before the " rebels " that shall never be exterminated, no matter what generations are destroyed!

Ah, Spenser, Spenser, and all the rest of you, poets or mere spoliators before or since, maybe now in your own flight you will give a little thought to the millions that were sent reeling along the roads of Ireland in that year and every year, that room might be made for the cunning ones, the like of you, that devoured our souls and our substance through the long night.

ST. BEAGHA FLIES FROM THE KING OF NORWAY'S SON.

Up in the north-west of England lies Cumberland, reefed with beauty of river and valley, that few now have eyes to behold. For that is the destiny since, farther south, in the foul places, baser gold outcropped under the soot and poisonous smoke. And following that gold the multitude went, the English multitude and the Irish one, too. Yes, the Irish that are the shipwreck of the centuries, this one or that, even to-day, in the tossing cities of the machines and the mills, enduring his annihilation with calm, with a kind of sullen gaiety even, that the native finds it difficult to understand. A fact related to other facts as sure as the day follows the night.

And well this girl knew it as she prayed and smiled aboard the ship that night she fled away in the year six hundred and forty of our Lord. For there wasn't one of all that company of saints that sailed east from Ireland long ago that didn't know he was lighting a candle in the sky for others to be guided by in the black following years.

And what a brave girl she is to be trusting herself to the crew these two nights now, and her beauty making it one long daytime in the

boat! A queer, brave girl, indeed, to be baffling the desire in the heart of that steersman there, and he without strength at the tiller from watching the stars that are floating in her eyes!

Until they have run into that Cumberland cove, and she leaps ashore, and is gone into the woods, leaving the boatmen enchanted to virtue for evermore. Enchanted and transformed when they learn later it was the king's daughter they had ferried out of Ireland those changeling nights.

The King of Norway's son had reached Royal Meath in search of her a little while ago. And a disappointed prince he returned home with all the gold vases and cups he had brought to be enticing her.

For this girl that had fled from her court and country was Beagha, whom Christ had called to be His alone, here in this wood and water corner of Cumberland, to found a hermitage, and afterwards again to explore Northumberland for Him, and, with Aidan, to stand for witness of the beauty that passes all other beauty in the heart of a runaway girl who gives herself to the Master's service.

INCHIQUIN'S PHANTOM OF LOVE.

There are queer things happen to those that betray their own. It might not be in this generation or the next that the judgment would come, but sure it is to come some time, and none that are marked will escape that day. To some it will be a cloud upon the fortunes, with hunger and ruin and a heedless world around. To others it will be a cloud upon the mind, long nights of madness and terrors and cursings that none can explain. Or often again the delusions will be of love and beauty and the mockery of the heart. And that was the way the blight came upon one of the Inchiquins, of the breed of the mighty Brian himself.

To-night a crisis is at hand in this place in Clare, where the trees seem to crowd down from the hills to look upon the lake. Over there on the north side, hidden between the close rhododendron bushes, a maniac, O'Quin, keeps his vigil. Magic is his kingdom, he calls out to the lake-birds; Danaan magic and the mysteries of the moon! And to-night he will capture this queen-swan, with the Danaan soul in her, and take her and love her in the haunted, crumbling castle that he owns on the

shore. And when she has gone flying over him thrice, and, with a light susurra of the wings, like the passes of magic itself, has brushed his forehead, he is ravished, and, crying out, takes her into his arms at the fourth coming, and is lost, face and hands, in the down of her neck, as he bears her like burning snow to his tryst. Up to the turret-room, then, he climbs with her, and watches the stars toss like a curtain above their love. Until, after a night of trembling ecstasy, there is dawn, and as the wings shimmer into a new, soft, satiny cream, sudden, by Danaan magic again, the swan is dissolved, and a shape passing Venus, when the shell sighed to uncover her, rises to Inchiquin, who falls gibbering at her feet, till his keepers find him, and spancil his hands, and lead the poor suffering madman back to his chamber, from which he shall not again be released until this blast is gone.

FLORENCE MacCARTHY IS LOVED AND BETRAYED.

Sir William St. Leger, writing from Cork in 1588 to Queen Elizabeth at London, suggested the usual English remedy for beauty in the world. Young Florence MacCarthy had, you see, married a wife younger still, only seventeen or so. She was true daughter and heiress to that other and more powerful MacCarthy Mor, Earl of Glencar, who boasted wide acres and many bastards beside. The people were stirred at the news of the wedding. They would follow this Florence as under a spell, now that the stars of old renown and new romance burned in his banner. The Spaniards would hail those stars too, and turn their prows the Irish way. Patriots and emancipators would flourish, and champions would again go forth! Oh, Ireland, Ireland, what stars of thine have risen, and how have they set? In dust and blood, in treachery and wrack and wailing winds.

So already the first murmur of the storm runs in St. Leger's letter here from that house on the hill behind Ballyvolane at Cork:—

"I would advise that Florence MacCarthy be divorced," he says, "and his wife be married

to some English gent. The young man is greatly embraced in his countie, as also in this provynce. He is fervente in the old religion. I verily think he was married with a mass."

(Is not that, reader, the whole picture of what England has meant to the world—the hard, frost-clear, steel-rigid, immediate, "practical," unimaginative, set-square and foot-rule survey of heart and soul?)

Three weeks after dispatch of that letter, at any rate, the girl-wife is seized and interned within the walls of Cork. In January of the next year Florence is taken and sent to the Tower of London. The romantic attachment is not over yet, however, and on February the seventh, at dusk, guided by "Brian of the Cards," a Corkman with the native genius for disguise, the bride escapes from her internment. It might be 1920 or 1921, to judge by the intelligence-system the people show. Friends and relatives of the girl are arrested and put through all the third degree routine of the Elizabethan code. But not one of them gives away the secret of her flight. For two years there is not a trace of her. Cork, for all its generations of Danish, mixed Norman, and Anglo-Irish compromisers, had the sterling hillmen's spirit and reticence in reserve in 1589

as in 1921, when "Brian of the Cards" reappeared in a hundred episodes in and out of the gaols and ambuscades of the day.

No wonder when Elizabeth heard of it in her high room in Whitehall she tossed her foxy wig and gave a bark:

"I am weary of those Irish dispatches," said she, and Minister-in-Waiting Walsingham's knees shook. Weary or not, however, guile must be pursued. A year later, therefore, in May, 1590, when Florence from the tower petitioned for a pardon for his wife still "on the run," Elizabeth, hoping for a compromise, threw out a hint that Eileen should come to Court herself and plead in person for her husband's release. It was Bacon, the first inventor of the "Killing Home Rule by kindness" game, whose counsel Elizabeth followed now. So, a little while later, Florence is out of the Tower and felicity is in sight. The miracle of a son and heir happens; there is a MacCarthy to inherit the vast Glencar estates that must fall to Eileen at the death of the mortgaged and erotic Earl, her father. Elizabeth hears of the baby, and in an access of diplomacy grants full pardon and permission to return to Ireland to the three children, for such now, in heart's delight, are husband, wife and son.

Back home again, they are feasted and idolised everywhere in Muskerry of the Love. Three nurses and six horsemen are allotted to watch over this baby that shall inherit Carbery, and half Kerry too, if the black misfortune will not come between. So the triumphal march progresses through the South. Happy are those who can have the child to foster for a month even, ere with smiles and singing he is welcomed to the next place. No wonder his mother is in ecstasies at it all—this darling that will take into his blood the kisses and the blessings of so many noble ones; he who will inherit Killarney itself, its breast-warm woodlands and lisping lakes!

Till St. Leger turns again to his ink-horn in that house behind Cork and writes another hard, frost-clear, set-square and foot-rule letter to Eliza, who leaps out of her chair, sniffs like a rough-haired terrier for an instant, and gives the decisive bark this time:

"I will not tolerate this MacCarthy in the South, and I will not tolerate this Shane O'Neill in the North."

Old Glencar is dead now; it is the year 1601; Florence has been "playing with" rebels on his estates; he has been up to some ca' canny tactics with Red Hugh and the great O'Neill in the Kinsale concentration. His wife of the

baby face and the "march of glory" the year before last—well, she has retraced her steps very badly too. She is an English spy now, retailing her husband's confidences to the foxy virgin that is queen of all the roulette race. Florence is, naturally enough, back in the Tower again. It is a queer syncopated romance after all, with Eileen spying and dying soon, and Florence hanging on in ill-defined captivity and unanalysable behaviour between England and Ireland for forty years more.

He kept the story of it well to himself. But it ate into the reef of his heart and bared the fine gold; so that there was a shining beauty always in him however low he fell. Perhaps you'd pass him by this very night, with his muttering and rhyming and his queer talk in that cellar basement off Thomas Street, Dublin. 'Tis only the mocking children that notice him now, and they calling him names through the broken panes of the window, the little twist of a man, wall-smeared and touselled, as he blinks at the candle blown into a twist by the wind, like himself. Until in his last stagger he upsets chair and all, and drops down with the beetles and the woodlice on the rotting floor. And there, thank God, he's asleep, as the old woman upstairs, who has a care for all tottering souls, peeps in to see what way he is the night. Asleep now in the dark, with the woodlice and the beetles knowing their hour.

And look! those others enter in a pageant of the past, his hopes and visions, his peers of the Barmecides; and rocking his little twist of a body, he hoists himself, raves to them, trembles, and falls back again upon the boards. And that dream merges in a deeper vision of hazel eyes and tender hands, and those glances

in which he was destroyed. Until the breathing grows stertorous; the beetles, scared by the sound of it, scurry into their holes.

Hail, then, whiskey, the conqueror, and laudanum that keeps the gate on the captive brain! Hail! hail! this black night with James Clarence Mangan, your spoil and cinderheap, the poor baffled fellow, whose father was a foolish, wasteful, boasting man, and who himself was made a stricken fool by that patron lady who had lured him, and laughed at her conquest then.

HENRY GRATTAN PUZZLES THE DOCTORS.

When a man young enough, and, to all appearances, "sound," in the strict medical acceptance of the word, is yet ill, complaining, out of sorts, doctors, even in the wisest consultation, can go entirely wrong in their diagnosis. For, if your specialist be not a psychologist and a sufferer (in the strict sense) himself too, he will often miss the secret spring of half the symptoms. So no wonder the Dublin doctors are for the most part falling back on their clichés when this dapper, shapely, charming fellow—he certainly doesn't look his thirty-six years—shows signs again of agitation, nerves, and the inexplicable sequelæ. (He has had these young men's symptoms before—attacks of agnosticism, pessimism, and all the rest of it.)

"Overwork, sir, overwork. You have been straining your resources—this Volunteer movement and these Parliamentary debates have taken it out of you. Your spirit is burning itself away."

The patient acquiesces. What else is there to do? They would never understand, and besides he could never, despite his fluency, explain the *arrière pensée*.

"A change of scene. Go abroad." That is the prescription.

He packs up and goes away to Spa in Belgium. In a little while he is better; his sleep is less agitated; the waters have given iron to his blood. He will come back and lose himself in politics again now. In politics and——

She is a lovely young woman, brought up in the sterling County Down, but later coming to Dublin for the softer spell of the people south. "The sweetness of her voice, a disposition most benign, a commanding air and figure"—there, are we not all in love with her ourselves now? And it won't be long, you'll see, till that young man, back from Belgium, gets better! Look! One evening his cure has come, they are engaged!

It is late October, 1782; Dublin hums with social excitement and the passion for politics that are the malady of the day. This marriage is a bombshell of flowers flung amongst the duelling, derivative, rather pathetic, well-to-do town (there was, alas, another tattered town, but nobody flung flowers into that). How enchanted everyone (the comfortable section) is! They will throng to see the wedding—oh, what stories and stories you'll hear!

But the young man's cure is not here yet.

His sweetheart is dangerously ill on the day before the honeymoon. The town doctors have given her up. In despair the distracted lover calls upon a surgeon attached to the garrison. By a bold experiment, with strong doses of mercury, this doctor saves her life and stabilises his own repute.

No wonder in frost-lit Christmas week there was a rapturous wedding and a honeymoon by the Dargle that surpassed all the fabled shimmering honeymoons of skiey-hearted lovers that went before.

And no wonder the young man's health was restored, and he lived for forty years after with this faithful wife, who loved him and loved Ireland, and because of both her loves shall not be quite forgotten, even in the severe winnowings of critical history on motives and men.

GERALD GRIFFIN SURRENDERS.

Gerald Griffin, the youth from Limerick who went to starve in London, had, however, before he was twenty-six, written "The Collegians." It was an achievement. What would the world not give thereafter! Fame, glory, ecstasy—call youth's imaginings by any other name, they are miracles always at twenty-five! And this youth did not differ from the rest. He would write plays, too; would hear the foot-lights hum in the wind of applause from the house.

Only, after a while, things are not as they seemed. The boy in him has passed with alarming speed. Who is this next to enter—a quiet-voiced, unaggressive, sweetly-weary man knocking at the gate of the Christian Brothers' Novitiate there by quiet old Dublin Bay? What! only thirty-five now. Well, your eyes look deeper. You have doubled some of the years by the experience you have had. And already you have solved the riddle, and—resigned! Welcome, then, brother; here we shall help you further to forget. You are wonderfully apt as a learner too, considering you begin a little late. And wonderfully resolute in your surrender, as a test will prove.

For here is a visitor for you, Gerald, to-day; a fair and fascinating visitor at the gate. It is a magnificent story. To tell it simply tells it full. Your brother, in the "Life" he wrote of you, set it down this way:—

"On being told there was a visitor to see him, he came down the (garden)-path; then, hearing her name, he stopped, turned quite pale, grew very much agitated, and, after a long pause, requested the messenger, with much emotion, to say 'He was very much obliged, was very well, and was exceedingly sorry he could not see her.'"

Firm and heroic, indeed, a genuine man thus holding his will at command. Though she going away, remembered, perhaps, very sadly, very tenderly, the message he had left her a while ago in a verse that shall keep the musk about it that the moth-years shall not destroy:—

"Oh, friend of my heart, if that doom should fall on me,
And thou should'st live on to remember my love,
Come oft to my tomb when the turf lies upon me,
And list to the even wind mourning above."

Prophecy, premonition, what would you call it, reader? These poets, like children, have revealings, foreknowledge.

And this poet knew that he had only turned his face away from a vision of earthly love here by quiet old Dublin Bay in order to keep his smile for death and the diviner love that touched his lips on the hillside at Cork in another short year.

EMIGRANT SWEETHEARTS

O'SULLIVAN OF MAINE.

When the long evenings begin to light with stars, and the bell-tents of bubbles tumble down over the plains of the sea, ships grow human, simple, petlike things, love only their due as they rest becalmed, easy, content upon the mothering water; love, rich and deep as the ocean itself when now Cupid comes over the poop here, and searches out from this motley steerage two whose eyes are made for mutual comforting. And that man there as he looks with a great longing towards the east, where his Ireland sublimed into pathos lies, now sees his native village enskied, and hears the young men's voices at their games again, till, in the dream of it, his heart must surely rip from his bosom and fly back home! And the young woman that sits watching him from the poop feels a flower push in her own breast, too, till it has multiplied and woven a roof of longing over his dear head. So that, drawn by the subtle magnetism of her, he turns and catches the first conscious glimpse of eyes that are now and forever his artificers to shape him a shield of sympathy, hope, affection, sacrifice, whatever love shall desire. A queer

miracle in such a place, indeed, for few would be minded to hope or remember at all aboard this emigrant ship, outward bound from the Shannon for far America, six weeks or three months' sail, maybe, across the sea.

'Tis a poor, destroyed country they are leaving, to be sure, with this young fellow, a schoolmaster of a family that was robbed and dispossessed because long ago they took a good toll of the thieves that came amongst them under Cromwell's holy hypocrisy. A poor, starved country that has no work to give this young girl from Cork either, and she ambitious and clean-hearted, and of the stuff that will not fail. And God sees it all, and His blessing is on the two of them, for when the young man looks a second time pleadingly the girl's way white swans rise off the breasts of her and come to him and bear him away, all that is just and faithful and manly in him, to live in her heart.

An O'Sullivan he was, like that other who made the great trek before him, and when he landed the wedding was soon arranged. And they settled in Maine, where God prospered them with splendid sons—one who was General John Sullivan, Washington's great deputy, able to smash down thousands of English now in revenge for the deeds that were

done against his own in other days; and another, James, who became Governor of Massachusetts, and wrote many learned books on the law.

A real love match that surely, with a glorious ending—the memory of it out there now in Sullivan City, Maine, that is called after the girl from Cork and the lad from Kerry that sailed to glory in the years gone by.

MARIA EDGEWORTH'S LIFE-LONG REGRET.

Monsieur Edelkrantz was a plain man to look at, but his eyes burned, and when he talked there was a spell about. In Sweden, where he lived, his reputation was high, and many loving glances were tendered to him by women that a young man might desire. But somewhere behind his burning eyes the queer light that signals for ideal was visible, and when Edelkrantz really fell in love it was by instinct he moved, without calculation and without consultation.

He was in Paris at the time, just before Christmas of 1802, and he proposed almost before the lady was aware of his emotion. She rejected him, as much in surprise as in dissatisfaction. Love to her had not seemed natural, given as she was to prudence and intellectual self-restraint. Now, too, she was in her thirty-seventh year, "getting on." She was frail, tiny, sensitive. As a child they had been so exasperated by her small stature that a specialist had been called in, by whose advice a process of racking and hanging had been undertaken in the effort to make her grow. But she had not grown, and she was still less comely to look upon after it was

ended. So that the disappointment worked upon her, and she hid herself from all attempts to photograph her for the rest of her life. Why, then, should this mild and superior gentleman of the Swedish King's Court have made her an offer?

If only she had been robust, a little ordinary, perhaps, she would have understood. For a while, in the clash of physical sensitiveness and over-wrought intellectual powers, she did not understand, and the unquenchable sorrow began. Her mother saw the real case. "Maria," she wrote, "was mistaken as to her own feelings. She refused M. Edelkrantz, but she was exceedingly in love with him." A few days after the refusal the girl broke down and wept in a Paris shop. Paris itself became unbearable. What was to be done? The young woman would return home; something in the Irish winter air and landscape is a soft hand stretched out to cool a burning brow. Arrived at Edgeworthstown, the little martyr flung herself into writing. She began "Leonora," the heart betraying itself in every line. In Sweden M. Edelkrantz lived out his days, unmarried, as Maria Edgeworth lived out hers at home and in London.

Practising that intellectualised and emotionless control which she preached implicitly in

her books, Brokenheart assumed an attitude, and played the part until her death, at the age of eighty-three. But her friends knew how she trembled and grew confused whenever a chance word or an event recalled that day when Love, that shall knock loudly at the door but once in any life, was turned away.

CORMAC FINDS EITHNE LOST IN THE WOOD.

It was the day when our pre-Christian culture was at its height. Life, however bloody and distracted by the wars of the regional kings, was out of reach of the gross materialisms of Rome, and the buccaneering by which her empire spread. Whatever little salvage of the fallen civilisations of Greece and Asia drifted to our shores was taken into the national scheme. The East gave us its illumination. Hy Brasil kept us enchanted from the West. Within our own four seas there was a glad hand and a blazing hearth in ten thousand places for any who came pleading only the privilege of the wayfaring folk. Customs that were straight up out of the heart were evolving into the Brehon compendium, later to become the finest systematised expression of the "will of the people" then known in Europe. True, indeed, they cut one another's throats with a swiftness and a ferocity that made the massacre almost humane by its speed. That was their war—a more splendid and cleanly process than the Flanders tear-shell and the Belfast baby-killing of our own times. And their peace was so much more cleanly too.

" The Chieftain grades are bound to entertain without asking any questions," says the Brehon Law (IV. 27), a sub-section that has lapsed out of all the class-ridden codes of the acquisitive property-swindling civilisations since.

So it is not to be wondered at, perhaps, if here and there a host of the open-hearted days forgot himself to ruin in his entertaining.

And 'twas that way Buiciodh, the wealthy Leinster grazier, squandered house and home, lent his horses and lost them, divided his fields with his broken friends, till there was nothing left of his own but a cow and a scribe of stony ground. And one night then, realising what he had done, and the despair coming down on him, didn't he set off with his wife and their foster-child to see what help they would get now themselves, and they poorer than any that came empty to their hearth in the years gone by.

And by many a wet path through woods where nothing but cracklings and little groans of old boughs would be heard Buiciodh and his wife and this foster-daughter reach Meath at last, Royal Meath, where Cormac, the King, is resting this while in state.

In a rude hunter's bothy they shelter this night again from the following wind. And

the young girl there, wrapped half in her fosterer's cloak—oh, isn't she lovely with the hair down over her shoulder to her breast, and it turning a little and turning again like gold or the sun in water, in the rising and falling of her in sleep!

And next day out there on the slope, as she bends down to the cow, milking her, isn't it a bow bent she is with her soft arched back like the bow-wood shining and sap-tender when it is cut and shaped young from the tree!

So what wonder if Cormac, the King, tired with the turmoil of that war against the Ultonians, and the fearful battling at Glaise an Eara, should be abolished into a sigh and an adoration at seeing her.

And what wonder if king and grazier's daughter, then, Cormac and Eithne, all moonlight and stardust and sea-polished bubbles, glitter up to Tara under *geasa* of Love, that shall hold them together in story till the last jewel in the crown of love itself shall dim.

TWO LONELY LOVERS IN THE FAMINE YEARS.

"We'll go walking now—we'll pick a bunch of primroses in the green spot at the bend of the road—and when we're married—what's that you say, Michael? Look, the cows are coming home, 'tis milking-time—isn't it a long time we're waiting on the priest—Michael! Michael!"

The woman who has been speaking thus in a broken, bewildered way has cried the last few words out in a kind of hysteria. As she does so she makes an effort to rise from the burst-straw mattress that gives off a cloud of chaff and dust as she falls back gasping on to it again. After a while, from underneath a smeared strip of rag or quilt in another corner of the room—the thing is too dirty to be sure which—a hand projects, trembling, covered with mucus and sweat. Then that drops down too, and the dirty covering, without divulging more of its secret, heaves as if a wind were struggling under it.

Let us hurry over and prop up this poor woman first to try and ease her breathing. With every gasp a fresh wrinkle dries into her forehead. There, she is a little easier

lying up against the wall. Oh, Mother of God, why must the poor suffer like this at all!

That rag in the other corner is very quiet again! Lift it up till we see if 'tis a Christian at all is there! Oh, wirra! wirra! how black he is turning, and the little wasted neck of him, and the stomach and the legs all bloated up! And stop! Look at that kick he gave!—He's gone! May the Lord have mercy on his soul!

Cover him up, hurry—she's slipping down herself over there—look at the hair and the torn yellow shift on her, all smeared from the wall. Oh, merciful God—raving she is again—raving till her young days come back to her.

"Get Donal his breakfast, let ye," she says. "The poor child. Take the top off of the milk for him—he isn't strong."

Ah, Donal, Donal, where are you now, and your father and mother dying here like this not many miles west from Kinsale in the famine year? 'Tis a long time since they heard from you, or your brother Tom, out there in the United States. But 'tis a hard life ye faced when ye went away in the emigrant ship, and maybe 'tis dead and buried ye are yourselves by this! Dead and buried then—the best way to be in such a world. For there wasn't a chance ever for one of you, father or mother or sons, with the landlords

and their agents like hawks about ye one year, and the blight and the hunger and the cholera-morbus like hawks again the next!

So to-morrow, when the poor-law man will come around and peer cautiously through the broken door and see no rag stirring he will know that there is no need for him now to enter, and that the rest is the undertaker's job.

And since coffins are in great demand these days let us go away, leaving poor old Padraic O'Connor and Kate, his wife, unseparated even in death.

True, indeed, it is a romance in colours of tears and the night. For these two had loved with the indestructible love that arises out of loneliness and laborious days.

And it all happened in 1847, a year when the Irish were "going with a vengeance," as the English commentator so characteristically said. And there were others besides the English who took a dispassionate, not to say brutal, view and attitude towards it all. For there was a man in Cork even then exporting corn for the want of which his brothers and sisters, under God, were dying on the side of the road or in the bare cabins west from Kinsale. And of him and his like it is hard to say anything now that could be printed in a book.

CAROL O'DALY AND EILY AROON.

Carol O'Daly in exile over in Spain was every day pining for home; the wind blew to him out of the west, and 'twas that way his hopes went with the sun, and it moving westward like a pilgrim hooded for the journey each night too. For Carol O'Daly had a soul as quick as well-water is to a little summer wind, and his heart could blow about like the puff-ball in April when a breath of love would come to it.

Drawn, therefore, by Destiny, the *Sidhe,* it must be, summoning him who know the wonders of Love, the *Sidhe* who are themselves all harp-strings and flute-stops in their enchanted minds, Carol O'Daly, spell-wise, one day is back in Ireland again, where first he had heard that floating viol of a voice that is Eibhlin Kavanagh. On his way he is at the moment we meet him from Dublin to Naas, with a single gallowglass for company. Until, hist, there is some woman crying for help in the glen beyond! Carol O'Daly springs forward, and the Sidhe-magic is here again. For it is a woman who has been robbed, she who was on her way from Dublin with purchases made for the wedding of her young mistress.

"Her name?" says Carol, thrilled at the story.

"Eibhlin Kavanagh, that is to wed Sir Richard Talbot," says she.

"Who has contrived it?" says he, betraying the onrush of love in himself.

"Why should you say that?" answers the woman, on her guard.

But the story is unfolded soon and the compact made. This marriage, forced upon the darling Eibhlin, shall not now prevail. The good woman enters into the plot they make; how Carol will disguise himself and perform on the harp till Eibhlin is enchanted back to him at the sound.

So they are near to the house, where the tables already are set, and the horses are riding up with guests from the country round. The good woman begs leave to bring in the aged harper who had come to her rescue when the robbers had left her terror-stricken on the road. Sir Richard, the bridegroom, gladly consents. Let this harper give them pre-nuptial music, that they may be drawn sweetly towards the wedding hour!

Carol puts his fingers to the strings, and they answer him like angels at call. In Eibhlin's cheeks the flowers come and go as her heart blossoms up, and in her ears there is

a tinkling as of the *Sidhe*, and they sorting out silks and fine lace for that other wedding her heart implores.

Until in one instant the harper throws his head back and the mock grey hairs tumble aside from the young unclouded eyes and the smooth forehead—and she sees, and there is annihilation in the two of them as their recognition flashes to one white flame.

So that she glides from the chamber, and he follows out, and the wedding guests rouse in alarm, and the horses toss their caparisoned heads in the stables as the blast goes by.

And away, away, in love that is more than music, in reconciliation that is starlight softened by the moon, they vanish, borne by the *Sidhe*, until at falling night they pass by Arcady and Elysium and the place of Heart's Desire, and through Tir na n-Og, where the fields are fluttering lark-song and light.

A true story, a false story, no story at all, reader, as you will! A dream, a beguiling, an illusion—well, even so. For what else, anywhere, is love?

HE CAME FROM ITALY BECAUSE SHE CALLED.

Oh, to think of all the fine men that have died for the love of her, the fine, handsome men! And there to be others ready to die for her this day or any day she will call.

It must be a spell she has, to be able to draw the best out of everyone that looks upon her, a spell surely. And here is another young man now, twenty-seven or twenty-eight, maybe, and he hasn't a thought in the world only her. You'd meet him often walking up the hill to Fiesole, or swinging across the ridge to Settignano, and down then at a great rate to his lodgings in the Lungarno at Florence. The beauty of the sky no longer holds him. He has no eyes now for that sunset closing up like a little fish into the vari-coloured shell of the dusk.

There's many a woman would give him a smile that Da Vinci could hardly paint, and he passing by; many an olive cheek burn and eye flash when a girl sewing on the wall by San Domenico would feel a sudden gold thread about the neck of her heart too. Many and many a one indeed. But he does not turn.

So at last it is September of 1640. He rises early and takes the road for Pisa, along that

Arno by whose banks the morning lights are like orchards let down ripening out of the night. Past Pisa then and the Leaning Tower, itself like a toy some child playing in a star grew tired of and let fall; and away at last by sea to the tryst at Dungannon or Newry or Cork, or wherever at all *she* cries out for his help, whom he blindly loves.

For she is Kathleen Ni Houlihan, one woman and all women in the bosom of her, one flower and all flowers in her breath, one ecstasy and all ecstasies in her embrace.

So may the Lord have mercy on that young man who came back from Florence to die at Dungannon or at Newry for her in the great wedding she had in 1641; and may He have mercy upon all the thousands that came that time and every time when she called out upon the four winds, and her favoured ones heard and were true.

THE LAST OF THE MacCARTHYS WEDS UNDER DURESS.

Let the cask be broached to-night and logs be piled! Kindle the brazier, let feasting hold! Beggar and stranger and fool may crowd the kitchen out, and over the swept ground the dancing feet fly. Run, run to the keep, and let the beacon be lit till the sky signals over Muskerry with flames round and ruddy, half gold, half rose, like a new babe's body when love first rejoices over it.

A babe's body indeed, even as this one here lapped in love now! For to-night, in Blarney Castle, in the year 1668, a son and heir is born to Callaghan MacCarthy, son himself of that Viscount Muskerry who led the Irish for Charles in 1661, and fought down to the last stronghold against the regicides; a son and heir destined for high deeds for Ireland too. And, however the younger guests will riot the hours away, the croneys will propitiate the child's guardian-angel with prayer as they huddle around the fire; such prayers of old women rehearsing for heaven as have long been Ireland's mystical anchorage; prayer that will keep God's hand over this child, too, on a day before Christmas, 1684, when, orphaned and

kidnapped, he is forced into a marriage at Westminster Abbey under the Protestant code. For the enemy have procured a daughter of the Earl of Sunderland, thus to seduce the high-born boy out of his faith and his nation, and he only sixteen.

But he flies soon from wife and keepers, reaches Ireland, reverts to Catholicism, succeeds to his title, enters the Dublin House of Lords, raises a troop of horse for James the Second, greets him on his landing at Kinsale in 1689, marches north to Derry, and nearly smashes the defences in a night, returns to Cork, is captured in the 1690 siege, and thus to London a prisoner again, this time rigorously in the Tower.

And now it is that love arrives and the omens are confounded. For his wife is faithful and is working for his release with the impassioned secrecy that only a woman lost in love can achieve. In 1694 her hero escapes, is hidden abroad for a little while, returns, and the honeymoon at last begins! So that when he is captured again she forces her way to prison with him, because no duress can now be too great since love is in it. And thus, until she dies in 1704, they keep the faith, and thereafter the lonely man disappears to an island in the Elbe, where he spends thirty

years in seclusion until his death, the last of the glittering line of MacCarthy, whose rolling acres brought in £100,000 every year ere the devouring English stole his and all men's lawful goods, and quoted Scripture in the deal.

CHARLES LAMB'S ONLY SWEETHEART.

Poor Charles Lamb! Nobody knows how much he went through. He had a fine position in the India Office at London, and he had a great name as a writer. But what good is it all when you have trouble at home! There is his sister, Mary, that killed their mother and nearly killed the father that night before Charles had time to stop her. How could he ever forget the fright of that? And God help us! look at the two of them this other day, and he holding her by the hand as they walk on, queer and hesitating, up Pentonville Road. That little parcel he has in the other hand could tell a story. 'Tis a strait-jacket is in it, and the sister, the poor creature, knows very well what that means. Isn't he the good brother, surely, to be stopping and soothing her every now and then; until, at last, they are at the big house with the bars and the gloomy blinds on the windows.

"I'll be up as early as I can to see you to-morrow," he says, trying to distract her attention as she stares at him ringing the bell.

She does not make any reply to that.

"You'll be home in a short while again," he goes on, quicker and with less buoyancy.

The door is opened, other bells are clanged, in answer to which a woman appears. She is in blue print uniform, with a face grey and ridged like the bars on the windows of the place.

The iron sameness of the madhouse is in every attitude. Mary Lamb knows and realises it all as she follows the lead along the corridor to the "suicides' room," with more bars and the tombstone, bloodless faces of the "dangerous" patients that are trapped behind them.

And Charles Lamb knows and realises it too as he makes his way back now in an alternating relief and despair, glad to be free, but in a panic, lest this time she may not recover at all.

For, with all his fame and fortune, there isn't another one in the wide world who understands his ways as his sister does. There isn't another to guess and control the little subtle griefs that eat him away under the jester's mask, like many a good jester that went before.

Humour and fun indeed!—there's not much of them left as he throws himself into his chair, while his father, moping over the cards, seems like a mockery of intelligence at the table.

There let us drop the curtain on father and

son alike, two black fates, as the lamp burns low.

* * * * * *

One summer night in the Lyceum Theatre, London, Charles Lamb, critic and kind-heart, age 44, took his seat in the stalls. Frances Kelly, 29, whose grandfather had owned a theatre at Dublin, and whose father had been a Castle caterer there, was to appear in the new play. The critic had known and admired her in other plays. To-night his heart, swept and garnished by the agonies for his sister's sake, was open wide to impression. Miss Kelly entered in and there abode. He floated home to his inkwell, and wrote a letter that remains still a fluttering thing between heart and heaven:—

"In many a sweet, assumed character I have learned to love you," he said, "but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence and come and be a reality to us? Can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who know nothing of you, and begin at last to live to yourself and your friends? As plainly and as frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me.

"It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind is once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you which you would every day have it in your power ten thousandfold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honour and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it."

She declined the offer, but remained his warmest friend, visiting his sister regularly, and always keeping the madonna smile to soothe himself. Surviving him long years, she gave up all her stage fortune to found a home for broken-down actresses, and, dying unmarried in her ninety-third year, she divulged a secret to one who watched by her bed:—

"I had to refuse him because of the madness that was in his family, but——."

ELIZABETH O'NEILL OF DROGHEDA.

When a woman of keen intellect has a heart of gold as well she is nature's noblest witness. In her example, and the memory of her, there is inspiration for ever when the story is told. And there was never a finer story in the world than Elizabeth O'Neill's of Drogheda city. There were five in family the day she was born in 1791, three brothers and two sisters, and the father wasn't very sensible, too fond of his drop! 'Twas a queer, poor kind of a town Drogheda was too, and the theatre that he was manager of didn't always pay. So the children had to take small parts as soon as ever they could toddle on, and try to make a few shillings for the hard-working mother. Now and again the lot of them would go up to Dundalk, and act in the loft in the brewery there. And 'twas wonderful how the people would clap when the little girl, Elizabeth, would say a few words, for she was a fine cut of a child, and when she was only ten she could play the part of the Duke of York to her father's Richard.

So 'twasn't long, my dear, before the managers in Dublin heard of her, and she was in great demand. And then, before she was

seventeen years old, she made a vow that she'd save every shilling she could, and make enough to set up the whole family in comfort, without any more of the horrid life they led, pulling and dragging from place to place. And, signs by, she had luck. For she wasn't more than a slip of a girl when a rich man fell in love with her one night at Kilkenny, and she helping an amateur company at the theatre there. He was a good, kind man, and he was to come in for a big estate near Cork. So she needn't do another day's work now if she liked. But she had her mind made up, and she wouldn't break her vow for all the love in the world. So what did she do but accept him, and asked him to wait for four or five years, for she told him she'd never marry anyone till she had made her family comfortable first. And she had such a grand spirit that she wanted to do it all by her own self. And 'twas well he took it, and promised her that he would wait as long as ever she would like.

And she went to London then and became a great favourite at Covent Garden and in every big city in a short while. Until in five years and a half, when she was only twenty-eight, she had saved £30,000. And after that she retired and settled it on the family, and got married herself, and went with her husband

to Mallow, in the County Cork, where she lived as happy as the days are long for fifty-two years until her death, hardly ever going away, and rarely even talking about the theatre at all. You'd see her occasionally in Cork City, the gentlest woman that ever came into it, with her gracious smile and the gestures of her arms like a swan stooping.

Lady Wrixon she was, a woman of great delicacy of feeling always, as you might have known when she stipulated on her first engagement at London that her brother should be allowed to come into the Green Room with her whenever she desired.

SARAH CURRAN.

A STORY packed with drama, passing to a swift curtain; too fine and flowery almost to turn the limes on again. But, look, the lights are up; how beautiful she is! Not handsome exactly, but lovely all the same, with those dear dark eyes, and the gleams that come in them, between the tears. Little wonder, surely, that he fell in love with her. And on that night, and he waiting the rope in Newgate Gaol, little wonder he expressed it thus in a letter to her father:—

"I would rather have had the affections of your daughter in the back settlements of America than the first situation this country could afford."

But, there! the hangman has kicked the plank away, and, with a writhe and a gasp of his beauty-breath, the boy that was Robert Emmet is stiffening out.

The poor child that loves him hears of it in the customary way. Sirr, the Castle Major, remarks upon it as he raids her rooms and gloats over her correspondence, until the Lord Lieutenant's Secretary, a cultured Englishman, draws him off indignantly from the job.

She flies to Cork then, blamed and blundered at by her father, the curious John Philpot

Curran. And so poor Sarah, nineteen and a wreck, takes shelter here on the Lee beside that hill, named by some torturing chance the "Lovers' Walk," where one night a scene is enacted never fitly to be described. They are dancing and swaying to fiddles, and winding one another in their arms and their glances within, while she, dissolved out of her earthly body, has strayed into the garden for the sympathy of the night. And now she croons a little, and over her the sky with all its stars is listener, and, moon-stroked, the river shines a cushion at her feet. Beauty, beauty everywhere amid a stillness made for meteors only and lovers whose hearts quicken like lost meteors too.

Pray for her then, friends, though it isn't long she'll be needing your prayers now; not long, indeed, and she dying miserably at twenty-six, after the child she gave birth to on the pitching packet-boat on that rough and lonely day off the coast of France.

Poor Sarah Curran, that married Captain Sturgeon, and had no luck anywhere, no more than he had, and he knocked from the saddle by a bullet soon in the Spanish wars.

AGE THAT MADE THEIR LOVE THE STRONGER.

THESE are a few words from the essay Spenser has left us on the State of Ireland in the year 1582. He is dealing with "the late wars in Munster," and he tells us that now "the end will be very short, for notwithstanding that the same was a most riche and plentiful countrey, full of corne and cattle . . . yet ere one year and a half they (the Irish) were brought to such wretchednesse as that any stony heart would have rued the same."

By that you will see what a time it was to try a woman or a man, and to prove what real love is, and to show that the heart is the inspirer of the grandest spectacles in age no less than in youth. And here is the old Earl of Desmond, that they have been hunting through the Glen of Aherlow, and across the Limerick border, and back then to the glens under Magillicuddy's Reeks in Kerry itself. And isn't the Countess with him, shielding and protecting him every chance she gets! And although she is one of the Butlers herself, and would like him to give up his resistance and admit defeat, there isn't any fear she'll ever betray him, not she. All Christmas of 1582 she stays with him in a crumbling cabin in the

wood of Kilquane by Kilmallock, with the rain-down in it and the south-west gales crying in the big open hearth. And one night, when a party from the garrison at Kilmallock is closing round them, she hears the sound of the cracking twigs as they come through the hedge, rouses her hunted earl, and creeps with him down to the swollen river, where they hide in the reeds, with the water up to their necks, till the hunters have gone, and wet and trembling the old couple are able to escape.

That, surely, is a love-story worth a thousand of them, a story of love grown old, but not crabbed or selfish or cringing, a tonic and a rebuke for all lovers jaded or divorced or jealous in our cinema-ridden day.

"Women in general, I am sorry to say, are mercenary, and especially if they have children, they are ready to make all sacrifices to their establishment. But my dearest love had bolder and juster views. On every occasion of my life I consulted her; we had no secrets one from the other. If ever I succeed in life, or attain anything like station or eminence, I shall consider it as due to her counsels and example."

That was his tribute, written many years after the runaway marriage from the house in Grafton Street, Dublin, where she lived with her grandfather, and was then only sixteen! Runaway marriages do not always turn out well—there are savagings and separations in the sequel with lesser folk. But this fellow was an immortal, however impecunious and tantalising his first steps towards "eminence" proved. Crossing over to London, he failed to achieve anything at the English Bar. Electrificd by blood-stories of the Southern seas, he offered himself as a pirate to the British Government. But Pitt refused his anti-Spanish bid. Coming back to Dublin in 1789, when he was twenty-six, he tried the Irish Bar. Again he failed, overwhelmed by

the chicane and counter-chicane of the law. In the reaction his soul was set free.

There are three lovely children by Matilda Witherington, the eloping child, now. Inspired by their eyes and the aura of them, the father moves amid spectral colours. He sees his country enskied, enaureoled, the fame of her again lighting the world. Across Napoleonic Paris and off Cork and Castlebar he polishes his jewel.

Ah, these dreamers of dreams, these incorruptible infants with the wisdom of the high places in their heads, those children a million years old, those avatars, martyrs, extremists, poets, revolutionaries—what shall we call them, and how shall we be rid of them? (say the demons!). Where shall we find them, what will they bring us? (say the angels!).

And Wolfe Tone, you with the lovely wife and the lovely children, and the lovelier dream with the terrible ending—tell us, tell us what is it at all, for you must know now! What is it, this fever and this fret, and the raging hatreds and the blinding desires, and one country a black tyrant, and the next a lamb bleeding away, and over it all the stars, with their white funeral lights, burning for ever round the catafalque for dead dreams that is called earth!

MARY HYNES THAT DIED YOUNG.

"THERE was a great many in love with her, but she died young." That was the way a woman who saw her in her glory told it in Galway a while ago. "A great many in love with her"; isn't it a terrible irony is in that, and we to know that somehow she never really made it up with any man at all!

She was at every hurling match, they say, and she dressed in white, and a man that saw her told Lady Gregory how the men would be crowding and jostling to get near her, and how she had words at will, and would make laughter with many to whom she spoke. And Raftery, the poet, made a lovely song about her, so that she became like one of the family in every house. But, for all, there was some trouble on her, as most could observe. "She had seen too much of the world," they say. Maybe 'twas that put the spell upon her and made her lovely and mystical and soon to die.

Ah, Mary Hynes, the "pearl that was in Ballilee"; you that drew the crowds when you went to the hurling; you that were always in white and your Sunday best, may God love you, girl, and may you walk in fine clothes with Mary and Bridget and the Saints of Ireland for ever in Heaven now.

THOMAS DAVIS'S BRIEF SWALLOW-FLIGHT.

He was a young man of twenty-nine, making up rhymes for the old, old reason:—

"There are crowns upon the bramble
And angels among men,
And triumph in each ramble
And fairies in the glen.

"And why this cherub chorus?
And why this hovering dove?
Peace round, within and o'er us,
Sweet sweetheart it is love!"

Oh, young man, young man, what a world is thine! And these streets of Dublin take on gold-leaf and silver-foil; the air grows pine-sweet; the town, slum and squalor though it be, blows into cupolas and floats about the sky!

Heigho, a golden town in autumn, 1845, for this young man at least. And *she* is only twenty, a young shoot, with the softness, the sweetness, the light of morning woods and evening dews in her lips, her eyes, every inch of her!

No wonder he flings himself into his work, lives laborious days for her sake, and the sake

of that other one now. His two loves? Yes, yes! Thomas Davis was that sort. He loved all of us that make up Ireland, loved us in the heights and in the depths nearly as much even as he loved Annie Hutton herself.

But a queer thing happened before he was thirty at all. He died! 'Twas only six short days he was ill—oh, the pity of it, the pity of it, and he to be gone before she could visit him or his friends be made aware how sick he was.

CAPTAIN MAYNE REID'S FANTASY.

ENTER the jongleur sublime! Tall, dark, with a mass of touselled hair, goatee beard, eyes brown and beautiful, this fellow is, indeed, out of a fairy book and a fashion plate, as he steps into the drawingroom in London on a December evening in 1853. These days he has been standing forth challenger, even at the gates of the "Times" newspaper, for his hero, Kossuth. A little earlier, in America, he had made a gallant defence of the memory of his friend, the enchanter Edgar Allen Poe. He deserves then, surely, whatever good thing Providence has in store for him this night or any night. And, indeed, there is a favour at hand even on the instant for the man from Ballyroney, County Down, one Mayne Reid, as his name and address run. She does not heed him too much, for she is only thirteen, and there is a new doll to be dressed, while the guests arrive and settle down to talk. True, she likes the colour and the panorama in him, and offers a child's glad smile each time she can spare her eyes from the all-absorbing doll. And when he comes other evenings, and lets his own eyes rove over and round her, she rises to the fantastic affection in him, and remains, unwitting, his slave. But years are

dread indexes, and he is thirty-six. Farewell, then, child, for the jongleur, muffling his bells, must go away. Go away you, too, child, and—no, do not forget!

* * * * * *

Let us ring up the curtain quickly again, since all of us so love a lover and must see how his passion thrives. The time is two years later, the scene a hall in a southern English town. Those slow but sentimental citizens have been listening to the man from Paris and Ballyroney as he addressed them on behalf of the hunted Poles, those other "Irish" of Central Europe. One listener, an accidental arrival, has been specially thrilled. At the close of the eloquence she picks her way to him:—

"You!"

"And you!"

So, hurry, hurry the slow details, till in a month or so the doors of Elysium are wide, and child-wife and hero-husband have entered in, his due and hers surely, if ever there is due accorded!

For Captain Mayne Reid had roughed it hard in his own youth in U.S.A., and had stood out for Ireland and the old cause over there, though all the blood in him was foreign and hostile.

And what fairer and juster reward could be given him now, who by his books charmed the youth of the world, than a wife to be at once childlike freshness and simplicity, and maturely faithful and loving till the end of his fantastic days; a picture to be hung in the memory of all of us aching for elemental romance in a world livid with scandal and crabbed disillusionment in the gossiping towns.

SHE WAS CHEATED OF LOVE AT EVERY STEP.

THERE's many a story covered up from the eyes of the world, many a beautiful dream, and it whipped like a flower in the storm. And those that you would see smiling the most are the very ones, maybe, that look the saddest into their glass and they up in their own room. Some try to forget by taking a drop of drink, a few are eased by prayer and the grace of God, the majority surrender and acquiesce. To them, indeed, " memory is the only friend." What a pity it is that there is so seldom an escape, that the burden of " man was made to mourn " is always the same!

And, yet, why should we want it different? What contrast would there be left in death if life here was so much a thing to rejoice at? What contrast indeed! Or what is the logic of joy and sorrow at all, remembering the law of compensation, even here where " our sweetest songs are those that spring from saddest thought? "—which is the very reason why I tell you this story of an old lady who folded back into eternity the other day in the musk of her lost dreams.

Her story was exceptional, in this way—she

was a refined and sensitive creature, but without any learning out of the books. When she was a little thing her father was evicted from his holding on the Kerry border near Rathmore, and the family started life again "on the side of the road." There were no parish courts, no fair rent commissions, then. It was the day of an Ireland in chains and calumny. That family, like many another, had to depend on relatives and neighbours, and live on sufferance until the next turn of fortune might find them a rain-ridden cottage or a room in a house in one of the towns. 'Twas the suffering they went through that sharpened her wits, and made her heart fill with understanding and sympathy.

In a couple of years she was sixteen. She made her way then into Cork city, determined to go into service, and to send home the few shillings a week she'd earn. Her father was labouring now for a farmer at Kanturk, where himself and his wife and the four younger children were enduring that life of potatoes and salt and a little milk that was the normal one for their class. In Cork, then, she secured a situation at a wage of five pounds a year, to work in the basement of a house and shop in one of the principal streets. It was a white-washed kitchen, with a big yellow fungus high

up in the corner by the street, where a rain-pipe or a sewer leaked into the wall—nobody knew or cared which. As a result of it, sore throats and " colds " were a commonplace, and the girl was nearly always out of sorts. The political slavery imposed upon the people had generated a social heartlessness in them too. The humbler workers in Ireland had to endure conditions as exhausting as any in Europe. So by the time the poor girl was twenty, the fine edge of her sensitiveness was dulled, she was less critical of spiritual values. How else could it be when her blood was poisoned by bad air for fifteen hours of every day in the week, except, of course, on Sunday, when she enjoyed the privilege of an " evening out " from 6.30 to 10 p.m., and was expected to go to devotions (which she often did) during that time!

Anyway, in the slow paralysis of such a life she became ready for any adventure. A railway porter had made her acquaintance, and had begun to meet her after devotions. Then she gave up the devotions altogether, and conformed to his uninspired, if loving enough, type. He was a plain fellow, coarse rather, but able to mask it by cunning. Of peasant stock, from the indecisive urban type of peasant, the class who are often mercenary and will join almost any army, he had been pro-

moted from porter to guard, but he didn't relish the rank. The respectability of the uniform limited his "freedom"; he would sooner be back to the corduroys again. Physically, however, he was a hearty man, and he had the advantage of her in years too.

There was a kind of fatherliness in him, she thought, on the night when he had his hands about her on the North Mall. She had told him how hard the work was on her in the underground kitchen.

"Marry me so and give it up," said he, and she didn't know what she said for a minute or two as he nearly choked her with his earnestness.

That's how it began anyhow, and, indeed, it didn't prosper. They got married, and a son was born. The father had all a man might desire now—a wife, a child, and a clean little home. That wasn't enough, however, for this father. His small peasant mind wanted noise and popularity. It was a time when there were lashings of drink, and politics blew like the froth of porter over the brains of the people. The guard became a great politician; in the pubs he blathered about Ireland every night. The taste of drink was grand and your belly full of patriotism! As a natural corollary, he was sacked from his job on the line. From

that on he carried tar-barrels, worked up crowds to disturb meetings, lived on his wits.

His wife, awaking a second time to the horror of the world, went back to work as a charwoman, and kept the house going. A second son came. The father got drunk again, caught pneumonia, and died.

The mother, twenty-seven now, was beginning to realise life as she had never before realised it. She neither regretted nor forgot her husband. He represented an incident in her life, the sound of a broken bell heard farther and farther away till it would die down. She would not forget him because of the two lovely boys—they really were lovely, and not in her estimate alone. She could feel her fingers sore already in anticipation of the sweet pain of putting their new studs in the starched collars the day she would be dressing them up to take to the Christian Brothers' School. And then she'd think of them in their ganzies, and the fine shapely neck and shoulders of them amongst the other boys at football and the games. And they would grow up fine young men, and get a job after a horse or in a store maybe.

Oh, glory, glory, how love is entering into her heart really now! Do you wonder her eyes shine and her bosom is flower-sweet, and she

thinking of her sons even while she bends over, scrubbing the dirty floors of childless rich merchants or wilted old maids.

* * * * * *

It was lyrical and lovely when we broke off there. So lyrical that you, shrewd reader, must have felt it had suddenly turned insincere. Perhaps as an unfinished story it would read best thus. But, for all, why not finish it and hear the truth?

And the truth is queer, uncomfortable, irritating—worse. Oh, vro! vro! if you were to see her now, as I saw her in the District Hospital at ——, smiling and nodding her head without a word. And saying her prayers, and going about at the nuns' orders as gentle as a child, as serene as the moon in still autumn weather. What can she be thinking about at all? What, indeed, but love itself, love that she was cheated of at every turn. Oh, say a little prayer for her, and for all like her, who pass their purgatory on earth in desolating acquiescence in a fate they cannot ever understand.

A Postscript.

You are surprised I did not tell you what became of the boys. I wanted to tell you first

how the mother was brave in the end, as she had been at the beginning. For the story is about her, and there are women like her in every place. Well, the boys are dead. The dispensary doctor said there were hundreds died that time from the same cause, " they spat up blood." 'Twas terrible news when you were told that in Ireland long ago. For there were no special hospitals, no sanatoriums, no grants for food and drink then. And when one boy in a little tenement room was coughing out at every second breath in the night there was no hope for the other, however many angels of God were flying about the mother's head.

THE HUSBAND WHO WENT AWAY.

The made match, the marriage, the mated routine; she didn't take the trouble to try to understand—that was her way. There was no thought of a separation, a divorce, what not—these are the remedies of other civilisations; Ireland as yet refuses them—so it was hard on her, terribly hard. In a way it was foolish to have sent her in to that school in the city to pass the Middle Grade, and then to bring her home and keep her on the farm until a match could be made. She had a bit of ambition all right, could nearly revolt, but just held back. You know the sort, one of those girls who feel acutely, and at the last minute suppress themselves in obedience to some mystical inner warning. "Cowardice," an idealist would call it, "irresolution, stupidity," a fool who believes in revolution, and again revolution. It was neither, and Nelly proved it wasn't. Although, of course, 'tis a queer story all through.

From 1915, when they were married, somehow she had never warmed to him. He was a hulking, hairy fellow, stubborn, a good soul. You should see how he'd lift a pot of potatoes

off the fire as easy as if 'twas his hat he was taking (though, of course, he'd put the two hands to it). Watch him playing hurley and you'd shout when he'd catch the slitter, throw it up and give it a puck the half the length of the ground. His strength, all the same, didn't win her. The only thing was that she was gone about the little girl that was born to them on Lady Day in 1917; so gone about her that the father began to fear that was all she wanted, and that she wouldn't care how soon he'd strain himself behind the plough or be horned by the bull in the big field now.

"God blast you," said he to her one night; "you're neither fish nor flesh to me." For the life of her she couldn't, on the spur of the moment, soothe him, although, of course, that truculent sorrow in his voice just lay on her heart. After that, oh heavens, it was horrible! If nothing happened this snarling and sleeping existence would become a debasing routine of passion and indifference badly mixed. So it went on until in the winter of 1919 she was near her time again; the size of her was a kind of constant rebuke to the dry, snapping life they led in the house. They felt it; the child on the threshold was the breath of a divinity about to be unveiled. Somehow in the eighth month—it was January, 1921—the

father felt something stir in his heart. In him there was a birth-pang too.

"Nelly," said he, "I'm going over east with the boys to-night. You needn't fear." She smiled, and he gave a kind of twitch of recognition as he went out. All over her at that instant the warm, luscious, tender sprinkling of unseen flowers fell. Her body, head to foot, was lilac and hawthorn; it was as though the child was already born, and love came to the mother with that healing touch that has no words light-footed enough to follow it. Never till then had she known the sublimity of life. Mother of God, she is actually proud of him now; in a second more she is in love with him, with thoughts flowing round him like the halo round a star. And, praise be to God! how sound she sleeps those nights, how alert she wakes, how normal the labour is, how light the bearing-down pains, how easy the delivery!

All, all transfigured, and this second baby a lovely boy. And the father not to walk in the door for six months after that, and the furrows cut deep into the sides of his mouth, and the hair clumsily cropped on him, since 'twas one of the boys without skill with the scissors that did it, and they disbanding over by Glenflesk.

And the war to be over for a while at least,

the war for Ireland that had called the hulking, hairy fellow out to the flying company that night after New Year in 1921, and had lifted the veil from her eyes and made her see him and the beauty that was in him, and made him see her by the light of the dreams they both had in their hearts, dreams that the Lord alone can give and the Lord alone can take away, dreams that are called love of Ireland, and that have kept the soul of many an Irish lover clean and white through the ruining mists of time.

THE STORY-TELLER BEGS A FAVOUR ERE YOU GO.

They say that pity is akin to love—
Then, reader, pity me a little, please;
For your sake I have gathered up all these
Old drifts and treasure trove
Of sunken hearts and eyes that roll in sand
So many leagues from out the pleasant land.

"So many leagues"—remember who goes down
Amid old tides of love and love's renown,
Him shall the lonely wreckage hold in thrall,
To private dreams sunk, too, beyond recall!